



# Memorandum

**TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Council

**FROM:** Robert L. Davis

**SUBJECT: Inappropriate 9-1-1 Calls and Impact  
of 2-1-1 Services on 9-1-1 Call Volume**

**DATE:** May 22, 2006

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Approved

/s/

Date 05/24/06

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This memorandum is prepared in response to Councilmember Reed's request for information during the 2006-2007 Proposed Operating Budget Study Sessions regarding the number of inappropriate 9-1-1 calls and the anticipated impact of 2-1-1 services on 9-1-1 call volume.

## Inappropriate 9-1-1 Calls

Calls placed to the 9-1-1 number that do not generate an event in the CAD (Computer Aided Dispatch) system are not tracked. Thus, calls that are misdialed calls or are intended to be 3-1-1 related or informational calls are not tracked. Such calls are redirected as quickly as possible to free the dispatcher and line for legitimate 9-1-1 calls. Only calls that are false alarms that resulted in a dispatch are tracked. These false alarms, as reported on the False Alarm Incident Report (FAIR), are tracked for repeat incidents. Repeat offenders are subject to fines under the Administrative Citation program. As reported in the 2005-2006 Mid-year Budget Review, the number of false alarms in fiscal year 2004-2005 totaled 18,293 which is higher than the prior year total of 15,350 but lower than the five-year average of 19,345 false alarms based on a five year total of 96,725 false alarms.

## Potential Impact of 2-1-1 Calls

The purpose of 2-1-1 is to provide the public with an easy to remember number to call when they have questions about available community services within the county. Currently, the United Way of Silicon Valley provides information referrals for health and human services via a 7-digit telephone number Monday through Friday from 8:30 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. The call volume of this seven digit telephone number is approximately 7,500 calls per year for weekday services. During calendar year 2007, the United Way will implement 2-1-1 services within the county. This will expand their current weekday information and referral service to 24 hours per day, seven days per week via a new call center. Information provided to the public by the new call center will mainly focus on health and human services including housing, food, children's services and healthcare.

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There is currently only one live 2-1-1 call center in the Bay Area. This center, located in San Francisco, went live in late February of this year. Initial indications reflect no immediate impact on the level of 9-1-1 calls received by the City of San Francisco Emergency Communications Center (ECC). It is anticipated that the addition of 2-1-1 services to Santa Clara County will not result in a reduction of 9-1-1 call volume. Although the Police Department does not keep statistics on the type of calls referred from 9-1-1 to other services, anecdotal data suggests that health and human service related calls are normally received on non-emergency numbers such as 3-1-1 and the City's Call Center.

There is a possibility that the implementation of 2-1-1 within the county will temporarily increase calls to 9-1-1 as citizens attempt to ascertain the proper number to use. The confusion between 2-1-1, 3-1-1 and 9-1-1 might initially increase the number of calls to 9-1-1 until the public becomes accustomed to the correct number to call. In addition, 3-1-1 and 2-1-1 cannot currently handle wireless callers due to the complexity with technology. Thus, a citizen with a wireless device as their only telephone may be inclined to call 9-1-1 knowing they will be referred to the proper place. United Way is working with the wireless providers to provide 2-1-1 service for wireless callers in the future.

The Police Department will monitor the volume of 9-1-1 calls after the implementation of 2-1-1 within the county, scheduled for sometime in calendar year 2007.

/s/

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